

OECPR-7 Highlights: Monday, 1 December 2025

The seventh session of the Open-ended Committee of Permanent Representatives (OECPR-7) to the UN Environment Assembly (UNEA) opened, with delegates meeting in plenary and in two informal working groups to address resolutions and decisions related to: nature and climate; governance and law; circular economy, chemicals, waste and pollution; and strategic, budgetary, and governing bodies matters.

Opening of the Session and Adoption of the Agenda

OECPR-7 Chair Sultan Hajiyevev (Azerbaijan) opened the meeting urging cooperation and compromise to advance the draft resolutions and remarked that “a single leaf provides no shade.”

Inger Andersen, UN Environment Programme (UNEP) Executive Director, referred to the OECPR as the “engine under the hood” driving UNEA’s success. She highlighted global environmental progress such as the Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ) Agreement’s entry into force and advances during the Belém Climate Change Conference in garnering global ambition to mobilize substantial climate finance, including for adaptation. She noted however that the world remains off track in tackling climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution crises, and drew attention to UNEA-7’s theme, “advancing sustainable solutions for a resilient planet.”

The Committee thereafter adopted the agenda ([UNEP/OECPR.7/1](#) and [Add.1](#)).

General Statements: The AFRICAN GROUP welcomed progress made during informal consultations to ensure the OECPR draft resolutions are aligned with priorities identified by States. Supported by IRAN, CHINA, and SYRIA, they expressed concern over limited inclusion of the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities (CBDR) and urged fair, equitable outcomes that recognize diverse capacities and circumstances for implementation.

The EU emphasized the Committee’s role in delivering impactful, science-based resolutions and a strong ministerial declaration to address the triple planetary crisis. They also stressed the importance of strengthening multilateralism and supporting adoption of UNEP’s Medium-Term Strategy 2026-2029 and Programme of Work 2026-2027. ZAMBIA, BRAZIL, CHINA, and many others supported revitalizing multilateralism.

ETHIOPIA highlighted milestones in advancing the global environmental agenda including its national Green Legacy Initiative, the hosting of the Second Africa Climate Summit, and its role in hosting the upcoming 32nd

meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP) of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

IRAN, COLOMBIA, and ETHIOPIA urged using multilaterally agreed language to ensure progress in areas of divergence when negotiating the draft resolutions.

COLOMBIA, recalling their Presidency of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) COP 16, called for supporting Indigenous Peoples and local communities (IPLCs), Afro-descendants, children and youth. BRAZIL supported combating environmental racism facing Afro-descendant communities, IPLCs, and other marginalized groups through equity and racial justice. ARMENIA highlighted their hosting of CBD COP 17 in 2026, noting that this is an opportunity to review the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.

ZIMBABWE reiterated their commitment to Ramsar site establishment and management. BOTSWANA stated that negotiations should be guided by shared responsibility to future generations. SAUDI ARABIA called for implementation strategies for developing countries to address drought and land degradation. ANGOLA underlined the need for science-based and cost-effective solutions for climate change, desertification, and land degradation.

SWITZERLAND prioritized work on resolutions on chemicals and waste, minerals and metals, and, with MEXICO, strengthening UNEP’s role. NORWAY called to prioritize a small number of high quality, implementable resolutions.

CHINA called on the Committee to focus on result-oriented actions, and urged caution in proposing new initiatives, underlining the need to guarantee finances to effectively implement resolutions.

SYRIA called for establishing global mechanisms to support countries emerging from conflict situations. IRAQ called for enhanced international cooperation, capacity-building, and technical support for developing countries. SURINAME urged continuing negotiations towards a balanced text for an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY MAJOR GROUP welcomed the approval of the seventh Global Environment Outlook (GEO-7) but regretted the lack of approval of its summary for policymakers (SPM). CHILDREN AND YOUTH MAJOR GROUP urged Member States to redesign a more coherent, transparent, and effective system that delivers truly systemic solutions to current crises.

BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY MAJOR GROUP underlined the need for public-private partnerships to provide policy certainty for businesses working on solutions to environmental challenges. LOCAL AUTHORITIES

MAJOR GROUP called for more structured cooperation with regional and local governments. FARMERS MAJOR GROUP underlined the importance of science-based decision making that considers traditional and farmers' knowledge.

WOMEN MAJOR GROUP reported on the first Women's Environment Assembly convened in the lead-up to OECPR-7. INDIGENOUS PEOPLES MAJOR GROUP called for delegates to embed free and prior informed consent (FPIC) as a safeguard in all resolutions and decisions. NGO MAJOR GROUP identified inclusivity, collaboration, and accountability as pillars to guide discussions at this meeting. Noting the alarming links between ecocide and genocide in Gaza, MAJOR GROUP AND STAKEHOLDER REGIONAL FACILITATOR called for consideration of ecocide as an international crime and urged States to "choose justice over silence and peace over destruction."

Organization of Work

OECPR-7 Chair Hajiyev presented the proposed schedule of meetings annexed to the provisional agenda, noting that two working groups would consider four clusters of resolutions.

Several delegations, including SAUDI ARABIA, IRAN, UNITED ARAB EMIRATES (UAE), MOZAMBIQUE, and the RUSSIAN FEDERATION, opposed the 10:00 pm – 1:00 am meeting time slot, citing challenges for small delegations. The Secretariat recalled that these allocations had been proposed by the OECPR Bureau. BRAZIL stressed that the Bureau proposals are not mandatory and that OECPR could choose its own modalities. IRAN, ERITREA, and BAHRAIN preferred ending by 7:00 pm. The EU, NORWAY, and SWITZERLAND called for sufficient time to address all resolutions. Delegates agreed to remove the late-night slot and noted that extensions would require the consensus of delegates in the working groups.

Implementation of Resolutions and Decisions Adopted by UNEA

Patricia Kameri-Mbote, Director of UNEP's Law Division, provided an update on progress in implementing resolution 6/4 on promoting synergies, cooperation or collaboration for national implementation of multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs), and resolution 6/6 on fostering national action to address global environmental challenges through increased cooperation between UNEA, UNEP, and MEAs ([UNEP/EA.7/9](#)).

Rose Mwebaza, UNEP Regional Office for Africa (ROA), reported on progress in implementation of resolution 6/3 on enhancing the role and viability of regional forums of ministers of the environment and UNEP regional offices in achieving multilateral cooperation in tackling environmental challenges ([UNEP/EA.7/8](#)).

Sheila Aggarwal-Khan, Director of UNEP's Industry and Economy Division, provided an update on progress in the implementation of resolutions:

- 5/8 on a science-policy panel to contribute further to the sound management of chemicals and waste and to prevent pollution ([UNEP/EA.7/6](#));
- 6/1 on the circularity of a resilient, low-carbon sugar cane agro-industry ([UNEP/EA.7/7](#));
- 6/5 on environmental aspects of minerals and metals ([UNEP/EA.7/10](#));
- 6/8 on promoting sustainable lifestyles ([UNEP/EA.7/12](#));

- 6/9, paragraph 8, on the sound management of chemicals and waste pertaining to lead, cadmium, arsenic and organotins ([UNEP/EA.7/13](#));

- 6/9 on the sound management of chemicals and waste ([UNEP/EA.7/14](#));

- 6/10 on promoting regional cooperation on air pollution to improve air quality globally ([UNEP/EA.7/15](#)); and

- 6/11 on highly hazardous pesticides ([UNEP/EA.7/16](#)).

Susan Gardner, Director of UNEP's Ecosystems Division, reported on progress in the implementation of resolutions:

- 6/7 on combating sand and dust storms ([UNEP/EA.7/11](#));

- 6/12 on environmental assistance and recovery in areas affected by armed conflict ([UNEP/EA.7/17](#));

- 6/13 on effective and inclusive solutions for strengthening water policies to achieve sustainable development in the context of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution ([UNEP/EA.7/18](#));

- 6/14 on strengthening international efforts to combat desertification and land degradation, restore degraded land, promote land conservation and sustainable land management, contribute to land degradation neutrality, and enhance drought resilience ([UNEP/EA.7/19](#)); and
- 6/15 on strengthening ocean efforts to tackle climate change, marine biodiversity loss and pollution ([UNEP/EA.7/20](#)).

In response to a procedural query by the RUSSIAN FEDERATION on the convening of three parallel sessions, the Secretariat informed delegates that it is the first time that the OECPR is devoting a session to discussion of the progress reports and that the holding of the session in parallel with the working groups was a decision of the Bureau.

The RUSSIAN FEDERATION lamented insufficient implementation of resolution 6/7 on combating sand and dust storms, with BRAZIL; and proposed creating a general fund to enable allocating resources to finance the implementation of all decisions, not only those "favored by developed countries."

The EU, among other things, highlighted: concern about the slow pace of implementation for resolution 6/13 on strengthening water policies; and, supported by MEXICO, noted with regret that the GEO-7 SPM was not adopted, opining that it provides a "stark reminder of the pressures facing global science today."

BRAZIL stressed specifying that developed countries must significantly scale up financial resources to address implementation gaps concerning resolution 6/13.

MEXICO urged respect for the work of scientists, and welcomed the reports on the priorities for advancing sustainable solutions for a resilient planet ([UNEP/EA.7/2\(I\)](#)) and [UNEP/EA.7/2\(II\)](#)).

With these comments, the Committee took note of the progress reports.

Programmatic and Budgetary Matters

OECPR7 Chair Hajiyev introduced the draft Medium-Term Strategy for the period 2026–2029 ([UNEP/EA.7/3](#)), and the draft Programme of Work and Budget for the biennium 2026–2027 ([UNEP/EA.7/4](#)), to be addressed under Cluster D. He also introduced the report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions ([UNEP/EA.7/4/Add.1](#)).

UNEA Contributions to HLPF Meetings

Introducing the issue, OECPR-7 Chair Hajiyev recalled UNEA-3 resolution requiring the UNEP Executive

Director to provide inputs into the meetings of the High-level Political Forum (HLPF) on sustainable development (UNEP/EA.3/Res.3). He noted that no further action was required and closed the agenda item.

Preparation of Decisions and Outcomes of UNEA-7

Delegates worked in two informal working groups, considering resolutions and decisions under four clusters.

Cluster A on nature and climate: These discussions were co-facilitated by Kanako Okano (Japan) and Marie Haraldstad (Norway). Okano clarified that cross-cutting issues would be parked for discussion in plenary, and urged delegates to ensure the resolutions are technically and legally feasible, in a bid to ultimately drive meaningful change on the ground.

Okano opened deliberation of the draft resolution on strengthening the global response to the massive influx of Sargassum seaweed blooms. Countries discussed the scope of the issue, with a number of delegates emphasizing that Sargassum blooms constitute a “crisis,” notably in the Caribbean and West African regions of the Atlantic Ocean. Others preferred referring to the issue as a “challenge.” A few countries queried retaining reference to climate change as a primary driver of Sargassum blooms. Delegates agreed that the options for technology transfer modalities were cross-cutting and parked the discussions for later deliberations. Kanako invited countries to engage in informal discussions on the modalities for future work and actions on this draft resolution.

Haraldstad opened consideration of the draft resolution on the karst ecosystem for global water, biodiversity, climate resilience, and economic development. Delegates stumbled over the lack of a commonly agreed definition for “water security,” with delegates proposing “resilience” or “supply” as alternatives.

Delegates debated on guiding actions on karst ecosystems, with several countries cautioning against narrowing the scope of who is invited to act. They compromised on language inviting “members of UN specialized agencies,” noting that these include non-member States such as the State of Palestine and Niue.

Delegates agreed to strengthen language on considering actions that contribute to the conservation of karst ecosystems, though could not agree on whether to include their “sustainable use and/or management.” Divergence persisted on whether to specify the need for aligning to nationally determined approaches.

A few delegates queried the “climate relevance” of karst ecosystems, with others clarifying that these ecosystems act as underground carbon transport systems, natural water reservoirs, and are useful tools as early warning systems due to their fragile nature.

Cluster B on governance and law: This cluster was co-facilitated by Sara Elkhoully (Egypt) and Martin Röw (Germany). Röw explained that, with 90 minutes per resolution, delegates would work on the operative paragraphs in draft resolutions pertaining to AI, children and youth, sports, crimes and environment, and synergies.

Delegates started with the resolution on synergies, which is a merger of two resolutions submitted by Japan and Panama. Several developed countries supported, and several developing countries opposed, adding a paragraph requesting the UNEP Executive Director to inform CPR and UNEA on the proposed measures relevant to UNEP from the three workstreams of the UN80 initiative and

relevant work packages of the UN80 Action plan, as well as broader environmental agenda revision. Several delegations urged caution on the formulation of language pertaining to synergies, noting that MEAs have different membership and governing arrangements, and stressing the need to consider national circumstances.

Other issues of contention included: enhancing UNEP’s coordination and administrative functions; requesting the Secretariat to explore the feasibility of tracking progress across multiple commitments under MEAs through unified interfaces; building on existing initiatives such as the Data Reporting Tool for MEAs; and referencing the Bern Process on synergies among biodiversity-related conventions.

Delegates thereafter deliberated on the draft resolution on the environmental sustainability of Artificial Intelligence (AI) systems. They had a detailed discussion on a paragraph regarding Member States’ action on AI, aiming to strike a balance between adequately addressing this emerging topic and not being too prescriptive.

Cluster C on circular economy, chemicals, waste and pollution: These evening discussions were co-facilitated by Ontumetse Ontumetse (Botswana) and Michal Novotný (Czechia). Aiming to make progress on all three resolutions in this cluster, delegates progressed with the resolution on environmental dimensions of antimicrobial resistance, followed by the resolution on minerals and metals and then the resolution on sound management of chemicals and waste. Discussions will continue on Tuesday.

Cluster D on strategic, budgetary, and governing bodies matters: This group met in the evening and was co-facilitated by Tobias Ogweno (Kenya) and Nader Al-Tarawneh (Jordan). The resolutions, they explained, pertain to future UNEA sessions; the management of trust funds and earmarked contributions; the Medium-Term Strategy (2026-2029) and Programme of Work and Budget (2026-2027); and strengthening the role of the UNEP headquarters in Nairobi.

In The Corridors

Procedural matters took up an inordinate amount of time during the opening plenary, with delegations striving to strike a balance between in-session productivity and the human need for rest. With 19 resolutions and decisions on the table, allocating sufficient time to consider each one presented a unique challenge. Still recovering from “climate-COP hangovers,” others took issue with allocation of meeting times to 10:00 pm and potentially extending discussions to 1:00 am. A few delegations opined that long working hours could be avoided if there were fewer resolutions to consider, causing some to wonder which resolutions “could be easily scrapped.” One delegate noted that experiences in MEA negotiations have shown that States “can keep negotiating indefinitely, if given the option.” Still, many agreed, “completion is not guaranteed by longer hours, but by efficiency, preparedness, and how we use the time we have.”

In a related discussion, some delegations were concerned that, “year on year, we are unable to implement decisions that have been adopted by the Assembly,” due to lack of funds. With further belt-tightening prescribed under the UN80 initiative, and shifting geopolitical sands, this has never been more of a concern than it is now. How delegates will finance the 19 resolutions on the table remains to be seen.

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